Transportation
Land Development
Environmental
Services

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Meeting Notes

Attendees: See Attached List

Date/Time: 7/09/02 4:00 to 7:00PM open house & 7:00PM Presentation

Project No.:

Place: Londonderry Middle School,

Re: Londonderry Public Informational Meeting

Notes taken by: Bruce A. Tasker

Prior to the formal presentation, plans were set up in an "open house" setting to address issues, comments, and questions in an informal matter with the public on an individual basis.

For the formal meeting at 7:00PM, Jeff Brillhart opened the meeting and made introductions. He explained that this meeting is one of five Public Informational meetings being held by the Department in each of the communities along the study section of I-93 from Salem to Manchester. This meeting focuses on the status of the project since the last meetings were held in November and December of last year and is part of the Department Public Information meeting process initiated in the spring of 2000.

Jeff explained the Department is charged with improving the capacity and safety of this 18-mile section. He explained that in the Salem and Manchester areas, the highway currently carries over 110,000 vpd (vehicles per day) and 70,000 vpd, respectively. I-93 has a theoretical capacity to carry in the vicinity of 60,000 vpd to 70,000 vpd. By 2020, the projected volumes are approximately 140,000 vpd in Salem and 85,000 vpd in Manchester. The highway is over capacity today and the situation will worsen over time. Given the volume of vehicles on the highway, and the narrow width of the highway, I-93 is less forgiving than it otherwise might be, and consequently less safe.

In addition, given the age of the highway and the fact that it has not seen much in the way of major maintenance over the last 30 to 40 years, the highway is in need of major reconstruction.

The Department is conducting the design and evaluation process using the format of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A Scoping Report was published in the Spring of 2000 and addressed the project purpose and need, the existing conditions of traffic and infrastructure needs, and resources of concern.

Rail opportunities and what might be issues if rail service was implemented was studied. This evaluation was documented in a Rail Alternatives Study published in November of 2000.

The Department looked at a wide range of alternatives, conducted ridership analyses of various modes of transportation, and considered the merits of the possible alternatives. The alternatives

were screened that would not address the project purpose and need. This evaluation and screening was documented in the Rationale Report published in the spring of 2001.

Currently, the Department is completing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement discussing the reasonable range of alternatives and how they might affect the environment and address the project purpose and need.

As part of the study the Department has considered:

- A bike route along the I-93 corridor from Exit 2 to Exit 5 as part of a larger north - south of bike system study being done by the Department from Salem to Concord. This larger study will look at how the I-93 bike route might be incorporated to facilitate north-south bike movements.

- Potential secondary growth. Secondary growth may happen as a result of making NH more accessible by widening the highway, which in turn increases the construction of more homes and business in the communities along the corridor and outside the corridor, which may in turn create their own environmental impacts. These impacts to natural resources caused by secondary growth are of concern.

- Improving incident management. The Department has been working with local safety (police and fire) agencies, the state police, and the Federal Highway Administration to consider what steps might be taken to improve incident management capabilities; that is, addressing accidents along I-93 in a more timely manner to minimize delays and congestion. Some measures have been implemented and other will be added to improve the incident management capabilities before construction, during construction, and after construction is completed along the corridor.

- A large range of mitigation possibilities. Mitigation measures are intended to offer a means to offset the impacts associated with widening the highway. These measures include creating wetlands and floodplains and preserving important natural resource areas.

Jeff provided an overview of issues received at the various local meetings. That feedback focused on:

- Whether to widen I-93 to three of four lanes in each direction. The Department is proposing to build four lanes from Salem to Manchester.
- The need to minimize impacts to private properties.
- The need to construct sound barriers to lessen noise in neighborhoods adjacent to the highway.

Individual towns have also expressed their particular concerns relative to how the project affects their community.

For Salem a primary issue has been that the project not exacerbate the flooding that occurs in the Town and within the Spicket River watershed.

For Windham and Salem, a predominant issue has been the need to address water quality and highway runoff, especially with Canobie Lake (drinking water supply for Salem) and Cobbetts Pond located adjacent to the corridor.

Windham is also very much interested in ways to reduce the overall footprint of the highway through the Exit 3 interchange.

In Londonderry and Salem, the neighborhoods have expressed concerns about proposed park and ride lots.

Plan Presentation:

Tony Grande then described the plans. He noted the typical roadway cross-section, which includes four 12' travel lanes and 12' wide shoulders on the inside and outside of each barrel. Space (ranging from 60' to 90') for a potential future rail line is also being proposed to be reserved within the median as part of this project. A bike trail is conceptually depicted at the toe of slope or top of bank along the outside of the corridor from Exit 2 to Exit 5. Sound walls will also be constructed in selected locations throughout the project.

Tony then described the 200-scale plans for the entire project beginning at the MA / NH state line and proceeding north to the I-93 / I-293 split in Manchester. The 200-scale plan depicts the Department's Preferred Alternative, which is to widen I-93 to provide four travel lanes in each direction. Tony briefly presented the various design elements for the entire project proceeding from north to south:

- The potential future rail corridor would begin in Massachusetts and as it crosses the border into New Hampshire it would be located along the west side of the highway up to Exit 1 where it then crosses over the SB barrel and into the median. The rail line would then remain within the median all the way up to just north of Exit 5 where it would tie back into the existing rail bed to the west.

- The proposed bike path would begin at the Exit 2 park and ride and continue along the corridor, connecting with each of the park and rides, before ending at the Exit 5 park and ride.

- Beginning at the MA border the highway would be widened to accommodate four lanes in each direction. The bridge at Cross Street would be replaced; the Exit 1 ramps would be reconstructed to improve the existing geometry; and the bridges over NH 38 would also be replaced.

- In the Exit 2 area, the interchange would be reconstructed to a diamond type interchange configuration, eliminating the existing loop ramps. Pelham Road would be widened through the interchange area and a new park and ride lot is proposed in the southeast quadrant with access from South Policy Street to Raymond Avenue. The Brookdale Road Bridge would also be replaced.

- Approaching the Exit 3 area, the NB barrel will be shifted closer to the SB barrel, which will also be relocated and shifted slightly towards the median. A new diamond type interchange configuration is also proposed and a section of NH 111, west of I-93, will be relocated to the north and widened. A new park and ride lot adjacent to the NB barrel is also proposed.

- In general, all of the I-93 bridges south of the Exit 3 weigh stations are being replaced while the majority of the bridges to the north have been held as controls during the design, which will allow many of these newer bridges to be kept in place and widened.

- Approaching Exit 4, the bridges over Lowell Road, Fordway Extension and Kendall Pond Road will all be widened.

- Through the Exit 4 area, the westerly edge is held as a control and the widening occurs to the east. The existing SB ramps will be retained while the NB ramps will be reconstructed. The NH 102 bridge will be replaced, south of the existing bridge, and NH 102 will be widened. The Ash Street Bridge will also be replaced.

- Just south of Exit 5, the bridges over Stonehenge Road will be widened. The existing diamond interchange will be reconstructed with the same type configuration and NH 28 will be widened through the interchange area. The bridges over NH 28 and over the abandoned rail line will be replaced. A new park and ride is also proposed in the northwest quadrant.

- Proceeding into Manchester the bridges over Bodwell road and Cohas Brook will be widened to accommodate five lanes in each direction to allow for merging and diverging traffic for three lanes for I-93 and two lanes for I-293.

- Sound walls will also be constructed at ten different locations identified along the corridor. Five locations were identified in Salem, and partially carrying over into Windham. One sound wall was identified in Derry, two in Londonderry and two in Manchester.

Tony then described the project as it affects Londonderry and the Exit 4 interchange area using 100 scale plans.

I–93 Widening

Beginning south of the Windham / Derry Town line, the I-93 design is controlled by the recently replaced and widened North Lowell Road bridges where the inside median edges of both the NB and SB barrels are held and the widening occurs to the outside. To the north through Kendall Pond Road, the NB and SB barrel widening shifts to the west to avoid impacts to a prime wetland.

Between Kendall Pond Road through the Exit 4 interchange to Stonehenge Road, I-93 is widened primarily to the east. This layout retains the existing SB ramps by holding the westerly edge of the existing I-93 SB barrel with all widening of the SB barrel and construction of the NB barrel occurring to the east. The configuration of the NB ramps would be retained, but the ramps would be shifted to the east, reconstructed and lengthened to accommodate the highway widening. This option shifts the I-93 NB barrel closer to Wheeler Pond. No construction would be required in the actual pond area. Some impacts to the wetlands would occur. North of the Exit 4-interchange area, the widening continues to hold the westerly edge of the SB barrel. In doing so the apple orchard property is not impacted. This shift does impact a house on the westerly end of Red Lane and the pavement and loading area for two commercial buildings (Londonderry Commercial Center and Stom Commercial Park) along the westerly side of Londonderry Drive. In the vicinity of Stonehenge Road, the widening of the highway and the bridges over Stonehenge Road occurs to the outside for both the NB and the SB barrels. From Stonehenge Road to the north, the inside edges of the recently constructed bridges are being held as controls and the widening is towards the outside. The NB lanes are to be widened to the east and the SB lanes widened to the west. The NB barrel transitions from widening to the

outside to widening to the inside by holding the outside edge as a control. The SB barrel continues to hold the inside edge as long as possible, until just south of the Exit 5 interchange. The space being reserved for the rail line ends just north of the interchange and the I-93 Rail Corridor is proposed to tie back into the existing abandoned rail line to the west.

North of the Exit 5 interchange in Londonderry, the layout for the NB barrel continues to hold the outside edge as a control with widening towards the median through the Londonderry / Manchester Town Line where it begins to transition into the NHDOT's current Bodwell Road construction improvements. Since the rail line is not proceeding north of Exit 5, the SB barrel transitions back to the existing SB barrel holding the inside edge as a control. The SB barrel is widened towards the outside (westerly) edge through the Londonderry / Manchester Town Line where it then transitions into the current Bodwell Road improvements.

NH 102

NH 102 would be generally realigned south of existing NH 102. This would allow the use of the existing bridge to maintain traffic while the new bridge is completed. The new bridge will provide for 2-EB thru lanes, 2-EB left turn lanes, 2-WB thru lanes, a single WB right-turn lane and 5-foot shoulders and sidewalks. The westerly approach work can be completed in the vicinity of the existing NH 102 EB to I-93 SB on-ramp. The proposed NH 102 realignment will tie back to the existing alignment just west of the Burger King drive.

Ash Street/Pillsbury Road Bridge over I-93

The Ash Street / Pillsbury Road Bridge over I-93 would be replaced to accommodate the I-93 widening and the area in the median being preserved for future rail. The existing bridge would be replaced in its existing location and a temporary detour bridge would be constructed to the south of the existing bridge to maintain traffic.

Exit 5 Interchange

At Exit 5 Interchange, the SB ramps would have the same general diamond configuration as exists today, however they would be lengthened and widened with additional turn lanes. NH 28 would be widened to the west to accommodate 5-lanes through Symmes Drive. West of the intersection the 5-lanes are transition back to the existing two lanes on NH 28. A raised median island would be extended from the SB ramps westerly across Perkins Road to Symmes Drive where the median becomes a left-turn lane. The Symmes Drive / NH 28 intersection would provide access to the proposed park and ride and would be signalized. A short section of Perkins Road would be reconstructed to accommodate right-turns in / out only. From the interchange, the improvements extend the 5-lanes easterly (six lanes in the interchange area to allow for double left turns) through the signalized NH 28 / Liberty Drive intersection. East of the intersection the 5-lanes are transition back to the existing two lanes on NH 28. A raised median island is proposed along NH 28 in front of Auburn Road to force left turning traffic to use the signalized intersection at Liberty Drive and then travel along Independence Drive to get to Auburn Road. Access at the Auburn Road / NH 28 intersection would accommodate right turns into Auburn Road from NH 28 and right turns out of Auburn Road onto NH 28, only. The NB ramps would maintain the same general configuration that exists today however they would also be lengthened.

Noise Barriers

Two noise barrier locations in Londonderry are being recommended:

- I-93 NB near Seasons Lane on the east
- I-93 SB near Trolley Car Lane on the west

Property Acquisitions (excluding out buildings)

Tony identified the locations of the various properties in Londonderry that would be acquired as part of the highway improvements through this segment.

I-93 (Londonderry)	Reo Lane (1 ho.); Recor Trading (1 Com.)	1 Ho.; 1 Comm
Exit 5 Park and Ride	Exxon, Cycle World, Senior Rehab Center	3 Comm.

Tony noted that the park and ride lot location has resulted in considering five possible sites including two sites in the NW quadrant (one of which is the Department's most current preferred alternative involving three commercial properties and one involving the transfer station property); one site in the SW quadrant (involving undeveloped residential property off Perkins Road); one site in the SE quadrant (requiring the acquisition of the Sunoco property), and one site in the NE quadrant (requiring the acquisition of one home and a portion of the tree farm property). From a transportation perspective the park and ride lots in the NW quadrants are preferable providing ready access to the interstate and access to the potential rail corridor in the future.

Wetland Mitigation

Jacob Tinus explained that as part of the federal guidelines for projects like this the Department is required to mitigate impacts to wetlands and natural resources. As such, the Department has been in the process of identifying possible wetland mitigation sites to offset impacts resulting from the project improvements. Jacob noted that the total number of wetland acres impacted by the Department's preferred alternative from Salem to Manchester is approximately 85 acres. In the Town of Londonderry, the wetland impacts involve approximately 30 acres, consisting mostly of forested wetland and emergent marsh.

As required, the project must provide mitigation to compensate for the impacts to the natural resources. The mitigation is generally made up of four forms:

- Wetland restoration, which restores previously-filled wetlands.
- Wetland enhancement, which involves re-establishing hydrology to an area and/or planting additional wetlands plants.
- Wetland creation, which creates wetlands out of upland or dry land area.
- Preservation, which involves preserving existing wetland and adjacent upland.

Jacob explained that preservation has become an increasingly popular form of mitigation for many larger projects of late, as the Resource Agencies and the communities see it as a mechanism to preserve tracts of land and buffers to important local natural resources. Management of these areas can then be turned over to community or environmental organizations. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has indicated support for preservation when it protects regionally important wetlands or aquatic resources.

In all, the Department has visited more than 60 possible mitigation sites throughout the project corridor, totaling several thousand acres of land. The evaluated sites were suggested to NHDOT by local residents, local communities, or by the resources agencies. Jacob reviewed a 1" = 1,000' plan of the project corridor that showed all of the potential wetland mitigation sites to date that the

Department is considering. He then referred to the 1" = 500' plan that showed the location of surface water features (Beaver Brook, Horns/Hoods Pond, Wheeler Pond and Exit 5 Pond), and wetlands relative to the project corridor. The potential mitigation sites located within Londonderry (South Road and Bob Evans Tree Farm) were also pointed out on the plan. Jacob then described the advance mitigation site and the preservation property.

- South Road (advance mitigation) site: a creation and preservation site located west of I-93, near the Derry/Londonderry boundary. Beaver Brook flows through the site (portions are an old gravel pit), which is adjacent to existing town conservation land. Monitoring well data has been collected at the site, which is currently under design. Construction could begin in late 2003/early 2004.

- Bob Evans Tree Farm Site: a preservation site located east of I-93 and Exit 5, off Auburn Road. Consists of 200 acres of forested upland, a tree farm, trails, and wetlands (open water, emergent marsh, and isolated depressional wetlands).

Jacob then explained that currently the Department proposes the South Road site in Londonderry. The final "package" of mitigation properties would reflect a best attempt to compensate for wetland losses due to the highway widening project. Discussions will be ongoing to reach consensus on the final components of the compensatory mitigation package.

Schedule

Jeff Brillhart noted that this is the fourth meeting of a round of five meetings being held in the corridor communities in June and July. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is scheduled to be published in July. A design Public Hearing is being scheduled for September of this year. The Final Environmental Impact Statement is scheduled for completion in the spring of 2003. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2004.

Comments/Questions:

Comment: What is the project schedule and does the Department have the funding to construct this project?

J. Brillhart: The construction is expected to begin in 2004 and be completed in 2010/2012. Funding has been allocated for construction. A potential problem is having enough funding for this project, as well as other projects that are also scheduled for construction in the same time frame.

Comment: When will the traffic reach the 140,000 vpd volume?

J. Brillhart: Traffic volumes for the project were projected to the year 2020, and this volume in Salem is the highest along the 19-mile corridor. When this project is completed, the road will be more efficient and much safer. Over time and with the four lane widening, the 140,000 vpd in Salem area will again start to be congested. At that time, the Department will need to evaluate other transportation solutions and mode options. From the Department's point-of-view, widening the highway beyond four-lanes is not realistic. In the future, rail transportation or some other mode of transportation would hopefully have enough ridership to warrant that type of investment

Comment: Can you explain again for Londonderry, the acres of wetland impact and the number of acres of mitigation the Department is considering?

J. Brillhart: The Department has looked at a couple of mitigation areas in Londonderry, the advance mitigation site and the Tree Farm site. However only the advanced mitigation site is currently being proposed. The site provides about 75 acres of land and about 12 to 15 acres of creation. The Tree Farm site is another area that has merit, but whether the Department incorporates that site to the mitigation package remains to be seen.

Comment: What is the Department's intended wetland impact/mitigation ratio in Londonderry and how does that compare with the ratio the Department proposes for the rest of the project?

J. Brillhart: In Londonderry, there are approximately 30 acres of wetland impact. Currently, 75 acres of mitigation are being considered. For the entire project the Department is proposing, at this time, about 650 of mitigation acres for approximately 80 acres of wetland impact.

Comment: I think you are proposing 2:1 for Londonderry and about 8:1 overall?

J. Brillhart: An exact acre-to-acre ratio formula is not realistic when trying to develop mitigation within each community and for the entire project. The estimated construction and right-of-way costs involved for the mitigation site in Londonderry are quite high. I believe that the actual cost for the mitigation in Londonderry compares with the cost of mitigation being considered in other towns. One other point to keep in mind is the functions and values of the wetlands being impacted. Some wetlands along the highway are not considered as valuable as others. The functions of wetlands relative to being prime wetlands, or wetlands that provide flood storage, or wetlands that enhance water quality treatment must be considered. All those types of issues come into play as we identify what type of mitigation best addresses project impacts.

Comment: How was the mitigation package for Londonderry determined?

J. Brillhart: In the mid-90's, the Department held a number of meetings in Londonderry when we were looking for advance mitigation sites. The intent was to find sites that the Department could construct early on that could facilitate the permitting process. The South Road site was agreed upon as an excellent site.

Comment: The Town has invested a significant amount of time to identify several dozen parcels. There are tracts of land that we would like to preserve, and we would work with the Department to consider these other parcels.

J. Brillhart: The Department has asked for assistance from all Conservation Commissions in terms as to what their priorities would be for identifying mitigation in each town. The time to make decision is near, but the Department would certainly listen to what the Town has to say.

Comment: What is the construction cost of this project?

J. Brillhart: Construction is approximately $320 to $325 million in today's dollars, not including the cost of right-of-way and engineering.

Comment: Would it be fair to say that the park and ride options on the highway are there to help relieve congestion on the highway? Why did the Department decide to change its mind and shift the proposed park and ride site from the transfer station facility that was shown as the preferred site at previous meetings? I would think that leaving a transfer site adjacent to the proposed park and ride would have a negative affect on the use of park and ride.

J. Brillhart: At Exit 5, the Department has looked a many park and ride sites including a site off Perkins Road; a site on the transfer station property; a site on the Exxon

Station, Cycle World and the senior center properties; a site on the Sunoco/Dunkin Donuts property; and lastly, the Evans Tree Farm site. All of these sites have drawbacks and it is difficult to decide which site should be chosen. The current bus service provider for I-93 indicates that the Exit 5 park and ride lot would get the most ridership out of all the park and ride lots being considered along the highway. The Department has gone back and forth, but from a transportation perspective, either one of the sites in the NW quadrant of the interchange would work reasonably well. These two sites will work better than the other sites because they not only provide access to the highway fairly readily, but they would also provide access to future rail. The NH Department of Environmental Services and the transfer station owners have all said that relocating the transfer station would be extremely difficult, more difficult than finding new locations for the adjacent property owners.

Comment: Is the Department aware that the owner of the transfer station has approximately 30 to 40 acres within ¼ miles of Exit 5 on the east side of the highway?
Has the Department of Environmental Services discussed with you the difficulty involved in re-permitting underground gas tanks that are located on the Exxon site?

J. Brillhart: No, they have not.

Comment: Where does the rail service end at Exit 5?

J. Brillhart: Rail could end at Exit 5, or it could end further to the north, perhaps at the airport or downtown Manchester. If the passenger service from Lowell to Nashua works out well for the Nashua area, it will potentially continue to the north up to Manchester. Under that scenario the service along I-93 would not necessarily have to extend all the way to Manchester. The Department has began discussions with Massachusetts to initiate a major study independent of the I-93 study, to look at rail service into Massachusetts for the I-93 region.

Dee Cleary: (Auburn Conservation Commission): The water supply that is serving 10% of New Hampshire is in Auburn and Auburn will be impacted. The DELPHI study indicates that due to the highway expansion, 23 NH towns overall will experience an additional 5% increase in secondary growth. However some communities, like Auburn will experience an additional 30% increase in secondary growth because of the highway expansion. Only 8,000 acres of the 27,000 acres of the watershed is protected. I request that the Department strongly consider mitigation to further protect some of this water supply's watershed. I would like to get together with the Department and the other towns to discuss the secondary impacts and more specifically to discuss the impacts to and the protection of the watershed for Massabesic Lake.

Chris Dornin: (Derry News) To make the runway longer, the Manchester Airport Authority has cut across and paved over approximately 1 mile of the Manchester to Lawrence Rail line. There were two Supreme Court cases over that runway impact and the City won both cases. Does that court decision kill the Manchester to Lawrence rail option from extending to Manchester?

J. Brillhart: We have looked at other alternatives to either go around the Manchester Airport runway or under the airport runway.

Comment: Can you expand on the Public Hearing Process?

J. Brillhart: The Public Hearing is the official meeting for initiating the formal approval process for the project. It is generally a single meeting chaired by members of the Executive Council. Whether it will be a series of meetings over several days or simply one meeting would be dependent upon the Executive Councilors. The Department is discussing with both the US Army Corp of Engineers and the NH Department of Environmental Services, (both expected to be part of a joint public hearing), as to what their thoughts are, and then we will discuss the hearing location(s) and schedule with the Executive Councilors. The final hearing details and date have not been set. At the Public Hearing, three Councilors will listen to the Department's proposal to improve the highway, and input from the people at the meeting. The meeting testimony will be recorded and transcribed. Any project related correspondence that comes in two weeks before or after the Hearing will also become part of the official transcript. Following the Hearing, the Department will review the issues, catalog them and propose responses. That information will be reviewed by the Councilors and they will eventually make a decision as to whether the layout of the project should be approved or not. This process will take at least six months.

Comment: For the record, we are in the process of building an office building off of Auburn Road at Exit 5 and I want to go on record as being opposed to the median that is proposed to be constructed along NH 28. The median will block traffic from entering the driveway. We are requesting the Department look at alternatives that would not have this impact to the property.
Secondly, does the Department do anything to assess the impacts to business or is that something that is addressed after the fact?

J. Brillhart: The impact to properties are addressed as the Department goes through the design process. Public meetings are held to get input from various property owners and businessmen, citizens and elected officials. Plans are modified as appropriate in response to input received. These plans are conceptual and will become more detailed as we continue through the design process. The plans typically identify the worst case scenario, so that the impacts that are being shown for wetlands, for example (85 acres), hopefully will end up being less. Whether the design can be shifted or revised to reduce impacts to your property depends on the issues involved. As the Department goes through the design process, we will try to minimize the impacts to properties.

Comment: Are the property impact decisions that are made during the design process available in some report form or documentation?

J. Brillhart: The designs generally evolves. There is a record of sorts in meeting minutes and the EIS document. There are many details that are looked at. Some of them are looked at harder and longer than others because they merit more review.

Tom Irwin: (Conservation Law Foundation): With respect to rail, the CLF is on record as urging the Department to conduct further analysis for the potential for rail to be apart of solution. We are concerned with some of the assumptions used in that analysis. In light of the ridership the Downeaster has been experiencing, the CLF urges the DOT take a hard look at rail and carry this option forward as part of one of the widening alternatives. We ask that you not only look at the ridership benefits of rail, but also at other benefits that rail can provide. The restoration of the Manchester to Lawrence line, could serve not only commuter service, but also freight service. Rail service would provide air quality benefits. If rail stations

were approximately located the rail service could encourage downtown revitalization.

J. Brillhart: The Department did take a long hard look at different modes of transportation early on. The Rationale Report presented the finding in depth. The Department feels relatively comfortable that the conclusions reached in the Rationale Report are accurate, fair and reasonable. We could put a train out there, but we still need to improve I-93. Even if the Department missed it by 100%, rail service would not alleviate the need to widen I-93.

Tom Irwin: The CLF feels that rail can offset the need to widen the highway to four lanes and instead three lanes would be satisfactory. Relative to the Streamlining process, where does the issue of alternatives analysis stand? I heard the Department of Environmental Services and the EPA have also expressed concerns with the rail analysis. Where does that stand right now?

J. Brillhart: You are referring to the Streamlining process instituted by Senator Smith who serves on the Senate Public Works and Environment Committee down in Washington. Included in the last version of the Federal Highway authorization was a Streamlining initiative encouraging DOTs to work with the Agencies (the Environmental Protection Agency, the Army Corps of Engineers, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the state environmental agencies), in a streamlined fashion so that projects could get permitted more quickly. As the initiative is relatively new, and the I-93 widening relatively important, Senator Smith thought that it might be helpful if the Department engaged the Agencies in the Streamlining process.

As far as where the rail stands in this process, the Department published the Rationale Report with the conclusion that the rail service will not alleviate the need to widen the highway, and the widening should move forward. The report noted however, that eventually, rail service will be needed as the widened highway becomes congested yet again. The Agencies signed off on the Report with the requirement that the Department make a good faith effort to engage Massachusetts in studying transit alternatives from Manchester to Boston. The Department is discussing the idea with Massachusetts. Money has been proposed for this study ($2 million), and hopefully it will be included in federal legislation in the fall. We need to get started on that study now because it takes a long time to initiate rail service just as it does to widen a highway.

Comment: The DELPHI panel projected somewhere in the range of 40,000 additional people coming to this State. With that in mind, we would urge the Department to take a comprehensive approach to mitigation to supplement what is being proposed by the Department for the corridor communities with additional mitigation (including preservation) in some of the secondary communities. We also urge the Department to hold meetings in those communities and to notify those communities that the Department is willing to work with them regarding these issues.

J. Brillhart: The Department is willing to meet with the communities. There are concerns relative to secondary impacts as was stated earlier. However, mitigating for secondary impacts is another issue. These are impacts that may or may not take place; these are impacts that are removed from the project in terms of location and time; and these are impacts that presumably would require their own permit and mitigation. The Department is proposing, as part of the mitigation package, that technical assistance be provided to the five communities directly impacted by the highway, as well as the other 18 that are beyond the highway. In the Department's opinion, NH needs to do better with land use than what is

currently being done. NH could buy and preserve land, but ultimately, even preserving these pieces of land would result in what the Agencies call green islands. Better land use planning is what is required.

Comment: The raised median island along NH 28 at the intersection of NH28 and Auburn Road prevents full access in and out of my business. This is not right.

Janusz Czyzowski: (Londonderry Public Works Director): The gentleman's access is onto Auburn Road, for which no median island is proposed. Consequently the gentleman's access has full access onto Auburn Road. The layout proposed is appropriate. The Auburn Road / NH 28 intersection is congested today and I cannot see how there could be a different design than is what is shown in this location. On the west side of the Exit 5 interchange, I suggest the raised median island is to be extended past the current NH 28 / Perkins Road intersection, and Perkins Road be relocated to the intersection at Symmes Drive.

Comment: How are the Executive Councilors chosen?
J. Brillhart: They are elected officials. The Executive Councilor for Londonderry is Ray Wieczorek. Ruth Griffin is the Executive Councilor from the Seacoast, and her District includes Salem and Windham. David Wheeler is from Milford and he represents the southwest part of NH. All three will be serving on the Committee to chair the Public Hearing.

Comment: What is the status of the Exit 4A study? Will the Department be using Intelligent Transportation Systems measures?
J. Brillhart: The Towns of Derry and Londonderry have funded a study to look at the possibility of having an Exit 4A. They are going through a study process similar to the I-93 study process to consider alternatives and issues for the project. They have developed parts of the environmental document and plans for an alternative interchange locations. The Department and Federal Highway are overseeing the study and participating in discussions as to what should happen as Exit 4A interfaces with the I-93. It is essentially a Town project and I am not sure what the schedule is at this time. They do have meetings periodically and they do have a process to get approval.
Relative to Intelligent Transportation Systems, the measures involve the use of high tech equipment to improve the efficiency of the highway infrastructure. It is essentially a matter of improving communication between highway users, highway maintainers, and service organizations through the use of cameras, variable message boards, websites, and radio broadcasts to provide information to motorists on weather, accidents, highway conditions, etc. All these things are being considered for I-93 both prior to construction, during construction, as well as after construction.

Comment: Is there any way on improving the construction schedule? Are you looking at ways of having contractors work on multiple bridges and interchanges? On Route 3 in Massachusetts, they are building the whole thing in 2 to 3 years.
J. Brillhart: The Department is in the process of developing a conceptual contract schedule. Multiple construction contracts are part of the over all planning. Funding remains a concern.

Comment: How much of this project is federally funded?
J. Brillhart: 80% Federal; 20% State.

Comment: Are you talking eight lanes in all? How many temporary lanes will you build to maintain traffic during construction? How wide would the whole footprint of the road be if you include the regular lanes and the temporary lanes?

J. Brillhart: By building four lanes in each direction, two new lanes are added to the existing two lanes. Once the two new lanes are completed, traffic can shift onto the completed lanes and the existing lanes can be reconstructed. With a three lane section, the highway would need to be over widened to maintain two lanes of traffic, then the over widening removed. The footprint shouldn't be more than four lanes in each direction.

Comment: Will there be further study of the I-93 bike path after the Public Hearing?

J. Brillhart: At the Public Hearing, the Department will be presenting the I-93 bike path layout shown on the plans. It represents the worst case in terms of impacts. This bike path has the potential to connect neighborhoods with the park and ride lots and bus service. Whether elements of this bike path are incorporated into the overall statewide north-south bike route under study remains to be seen. That answer will probably not be known until the final design is started.